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A PAINTER IN BLACK AND WHITE.

BY PERRITON MAXWELL.



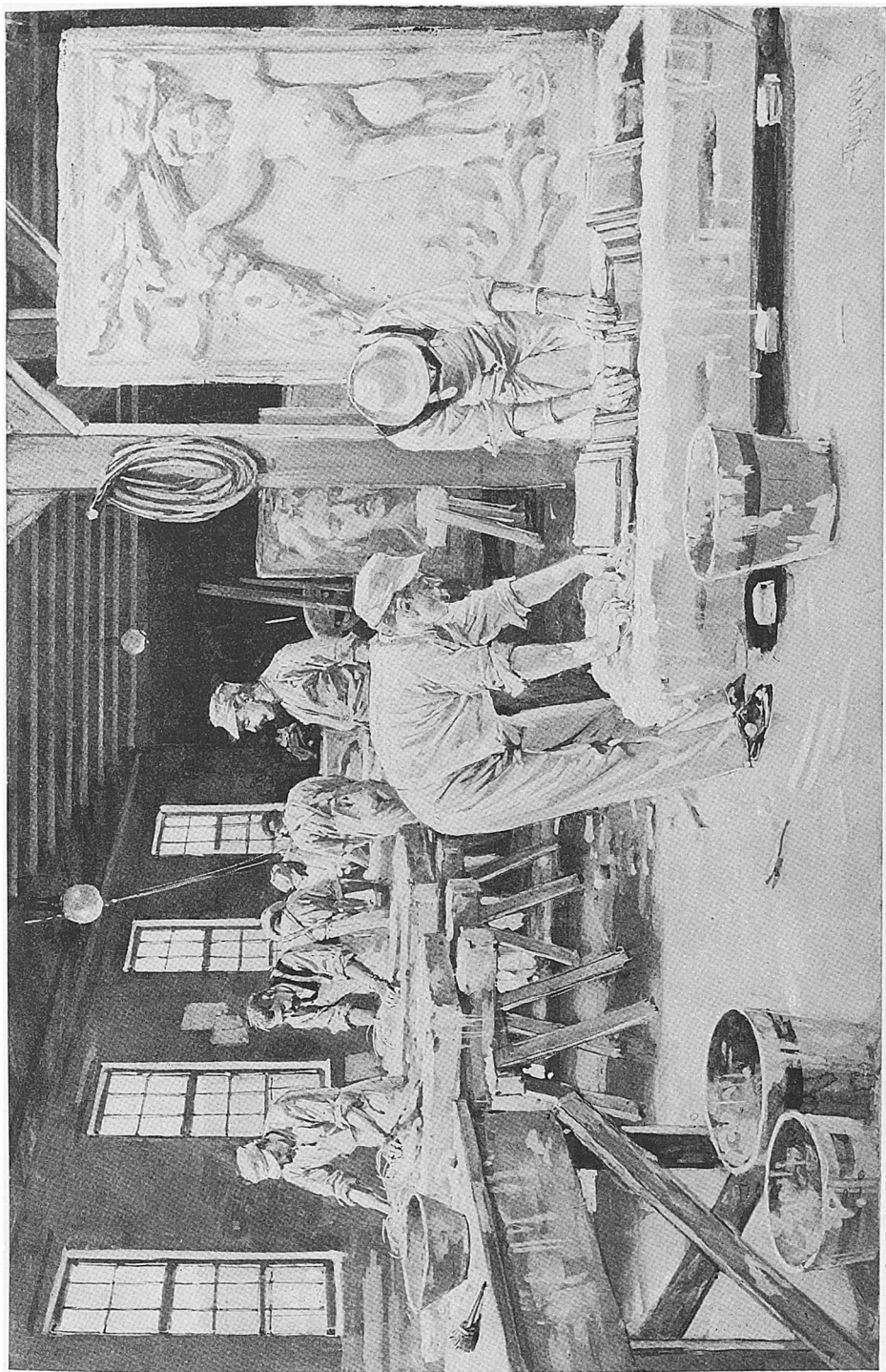
THURE DE THULSTRUP, a pen draughtsman of positive touch and facile execution, a painter of marked technical ability in the monochromatic mediums, an æsthetic industrialian closely identified with American illustrative art, and a man well versed in wars and travel, comes to us from the chilly clime of storied Sweden, where he was born, at Stockholm, in 1848.

Of Mr. de Thulstrup's personal character and career but little need there be said; it is the character and career of his art, rather than that of the artist, which most concerns the writer. It will therefore suffice to remark that the youthful De Thulstrup received one kind of education at the Royal Military Academy of Sweden, from which institution he was in due time graduated with the usual honors expected of men predestined to renown and riches. Soon afterward Mr. de Thulstrup took his first lessons in the larger school of life, and began that broader education which is called experience, and which ends only with death. It was an eventful period of our artist's life when he went to bed one night an ordinary citizen of Stockholm and awoke the next morning to find himself a soldier entitled to wear the imposing uniform of a Swedish lieutenant of artillery.

Then, tiring of this honor, he left his birthland and journeyed southward. After knocking about the principal cities of the Continent for a time, his military predilections came to the surface again, and asserted themselves so strongly that he joined the French army and went to Algiers with the famous "Legion Étrangère." At this point of his life the future picturist of American periodicals was quite convinced that he had been born a warrior, and with this conviction firmly fixed in his mind, he suffered but slight difficulty in finding an abundance of rare entertainment and congenial employment during the Franco-Prussian conflicts of 1870-71. Perhaps it was because he experienced some sudden revulsion against the grim carnage and prosaic business of European warfare, or perhaps it was merely to gratify a long-cherished desire to become acquainted with the men and things of America, that he set sail for this country in 1873. At all events, the trend of his thoughts changed radically as soon as he touched these shores. War and soldiery completely fled his mind, and very soon after his arrival here the embryo illustrator was installed as a student in the then recently organized Art Students' League of New York. This was the initiatory act in Mr. de



"STUDY OF AN INDIAN." BY T. DE THULSTRUP.



Drawn by T. de Thulstrup.

"THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION—WORKERS IN STAFF."

From Harper's Weekly. Copyright, 1892, Harper & Bros.

Thulstrup's art career. It soon became evident that he would have no more of military life excepting on paper and canvas. He had relinquished his carbine for a stick of charcoal; he had abandoned his bayonet for a brush, and henceforth his only battles were to be fought with the none too easily conquered problems of his new vocation.

Mr. de Thulstrup's life as an illustrator really dates from the publication of his first drawings made for the old Daily Graphic of New York. He remained in the service of this journal for several years, and when he finally severed his connection with the Graphic, it was to become a special staff artist for Frank Leslie's periodicals. There is sufficient evidence in this fact that Mr. de Thulstrup's gifts of versatility and sound workmanship were early displayed and early appreciated. In 1881 he was engaged by Harper & Brothers as a general illustrator for their publications, and by this concern he is still actively employed.

Mr. de Thulstrup's black and white productions are not to be too severely subjected to the critical analysis which may more properly be bestowed upon his work in color. And yet there are but few of his colored canvases that one would willingly exchange for a single bit of brilliant technique from his pen point or one of his spirited and broadly-executed paintings in black and white. More than any other illustrator of the day is Mr. de Thulstrup a thorough technician. He is a *painter* of pictures for the press. His illustrative work,

executed for the most part under high pressure, has all of those nice artistic qualities which the cultured eye first looks for in a painting—honest brushwork, good composition, and large suggestiveness—and seldom are these primary painterly virtues wanting. While this holds true, it is also to be noted that the greater public of artless folk, who ask only that their eyes be delighted, find full enjoyment in the contemplation of Mr. de Thulstrup's work.

There is a happy union of suave subject and vigorous execution in all he does. His men, women, and horses are well-groomed and high-bred. There does not seem to be any particular reason for their existence, but you are glad that they are alive, if it



"SKETCH OF A MODEL." BY T. DE THULSTRUP.



*Sketched from nature by
T. de Thulstrup.*

"SWEDISH PEASANT GIRL."



*Sketched from nature by T.
de Thulstrup.*

"SWEDISH PEASANT GIRL."

is only because they offered acceptable material for Mr. de Thulstrup's richly-dowered tools. It would at first appear, if one may judge an artist's mental equipment by means of his pictures, that here was a man whose perception of life is as broad as Shakespeare's own. But Mr. de Thulstrup's view of life is all upon one side. He has met many persons whose manners charm. His characters have many faces, and fall in admirably with their surroundings. The people of his pictures are never tragic or morose; they are remarkably well-behaved. They smile and bow and make themselves agreeable to each other all the day, and you long to see the spell of amiability broken. You cannot help wishing at times that something calamitous would happen to disturb their oppressive equanimity. Still, they are such worthy persons, and their characteristics are so well presented, that you dismiss the desire for disturbance as something quite ungenerous, though warranted. It would be a pleasurable experience to find in any drawing or painting of Mr. de Thulstrup's making, some show of honest sentiment. He seems to be either supremely contemptuous or studiously careless of the subtleties of human emotion. It is hardly just to assume that he purposely ignores what may be termed the sub-surface qualities of a picture—the psychical and sensory side. And yet in none of his picturements, charmingly conceived and superbly executed as most of them are, is it possible to find a fleck of poetic feeling.

It may be that Mr. de Thulstrup has no regard for what is called the spirituelle or soulful part of a painting, and he is not to be condemned off-hand for that in these days of numerous artistic dreamers who are without the power to acceptably embody their fine visions on canvas. But be all this as it may, we have the fact unmistakably fixed in pigment that the clever artist under consideration here, elects to present in his own strongly individual way the common scenes of contemporary life in this and other lands; the daily doings of the best persons in these

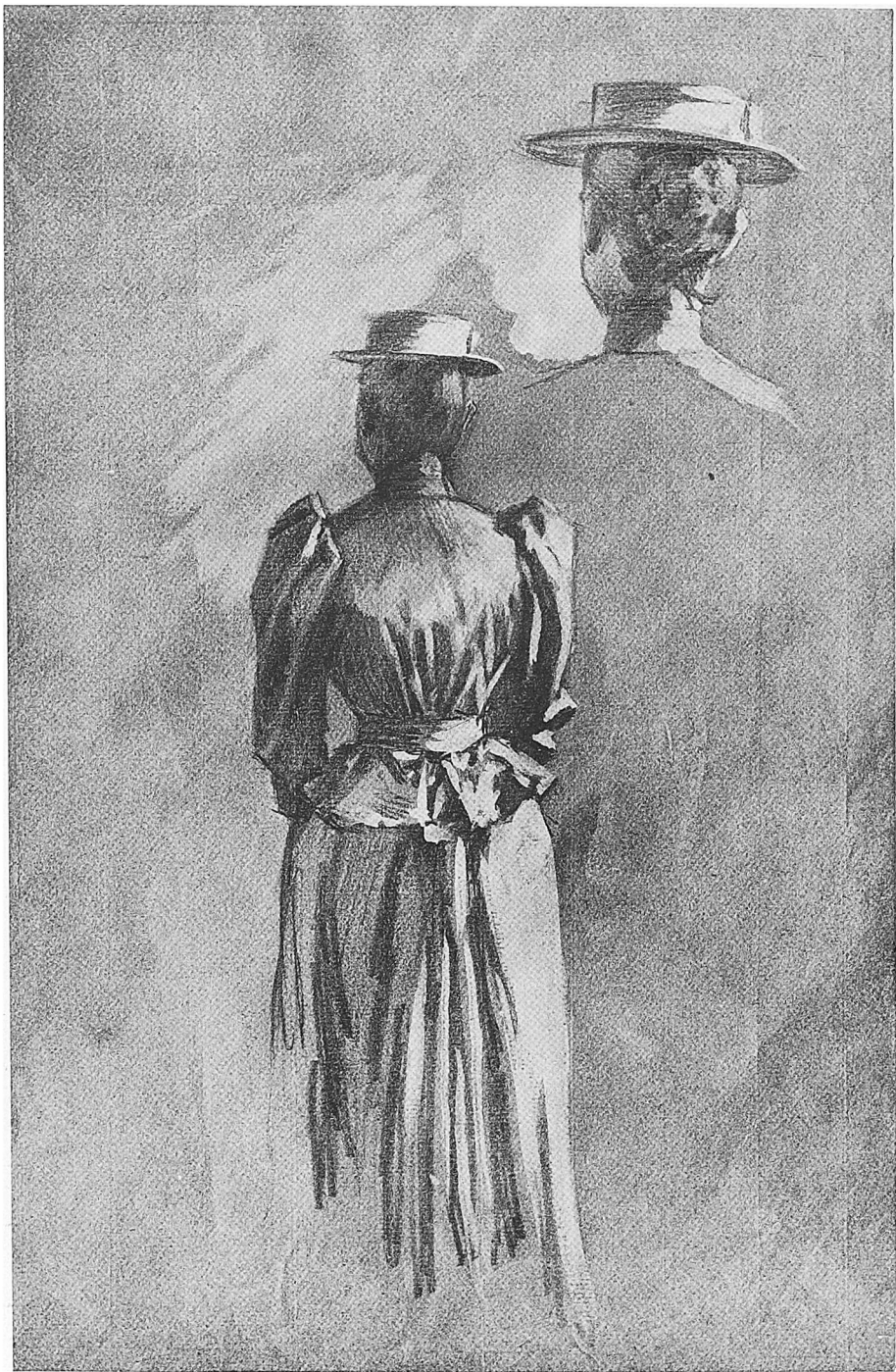
lands, and the whole presentment made surprisingly real and vivacious as to the externals of things. In the representation of soldiery and horses the story Mr. de Thulstrup has to tell is invariable, engaging, and curiously dissimilar to his renderings of other animated subjects. Especially in the violent action of the horse does he display rare powers of observation and a knowledge of equine peculiarities quite uncommon. His horses trot or gallop, rear or plunge, balk or stand immovable but alert, at the will or whim of his brush; this vital activity is also part and parcel of his pictures of military life, and one cannot refrain from inquiring, when viewing these stirring scenes, why some of the same vivacious movement and asserted feeling is not put into the artist's pictures of ordinary men of health and lively affairs?

Mr. de Thulstrup's talent for recording the bright facts of nature is unsurpassably fine, and it is with a deal of local pride and self-satisfaction that one calls to mind that the talent is a flower native to our soil though sprung from an exotic



From a pencil sketch by T. de Thulstrup.

"STUDY OF A GIRL."



"A STUDY OF LIGHT AND SHADE." BY T. DE THULSTRUP.

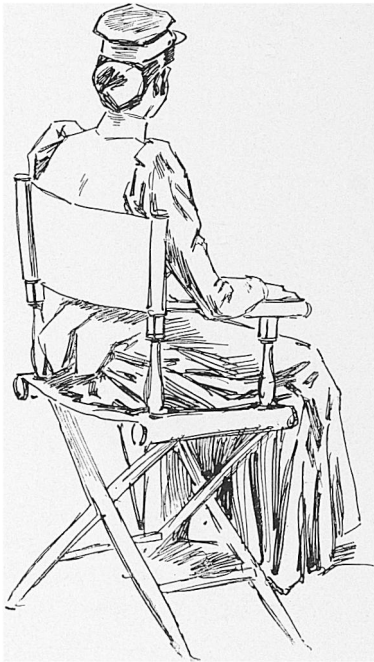
seed. What Mr. de Thulstrup lacks in divination and emotion he more than liberally repays in profusion of themes and a never-failing cheerfulness. There is a visual delightment in the familiar poses and no less familiar faces of his men and women. Delightful are the grace and light-heartedness of his women, and equally delightful the sturdy build and athletic proportions of his men.

It is beyond the grasp of mediocre skill to obtain such brilliant effects with so small an expenditure of artistic effort as Mr. de Thulstrup is continually doing. His is a consummate artistry, inherent to his nature ; as truly of himself as is his hair or his complexion. It is to be expected that the alien who comes to this coast and takes up with the necessarily unfamiliar ways of our life, should always retain a few of his home-acquired habits and betray in one way or another his foreign birth, and that upon the most momentous as well as upon the most insignificant occasions.

But Mr. de Thulstrup has been saved from the common embarrassment because he learned the artistic speech of the place of his adoption before so much as the first principles of his own racial language of the brush and pencil had been taught him. Though somewhat advanced in manhood when he came across the brine, he was sweetly unconscious of the eminence he was one day to attain in the field of American art. That he has fairly won his way to the top and holds at the moment a position among the foremost illustrators of the day, is due altogether to his own unceasing industry married to a singular acuity and vigor of pictorial perception. The firmness of his touch and the charming idiosyncrasies of his method were taught him in no school. His perfect drawing is purely the result of observation

and practice. There are no affectations or obtrusive mannerisms in his work. The pictures he puts out of hand in these latter days are accurate, clear, and frank expositions of objects as they appear to normal eyes. He resorts to no cheap subterfuge of art, and seeks to charm more by his rugged sincerity and close adherence to natural truths than by the subtler schemes of pen point and brush.

The best work that Mr. de Thulstrup has done is to be seen in the long gallery of black and white paintings and sketches formed by the recent volumes of the Harper periodicals. Especially in the larger supplementary designs issued with Harper's Weekly do we see him at his best, and are afforded a closer view of his present artistic capacity. To say that he will perform many more brilliant feats of artistry in the limited medium he has chosen to employ, requires no special gift of prophecy. Such a robust talent as that which is the happy possession of Mr. de Thulstrup must of necessity expand and reach out after loftier things. He takes life very seriously now, but his seriousness is that of a conscientious student absorbed



*Painting by T. de Thulstrup.
Traced from the original by the artist.*

"A SUMMER GIRL."

in his studies. We cannot complain of his indifference to our pictorial inclinations. Though we get from him nothing but the hard realities of life, we get them with a verve and freshness which warrant no dissatisfaction. The most casual examiner of Mr. de Thulstrup's effects must realize that his remarkable precision of handling and assurance of outline does not come to him by a succession of happy accidents; the persistent labor and careful analytical study he puts into the simplest of his drawings would make the tyro at illustration gasp with awe and admiration. To what extent Mr. de Thulstrup carries his care for absolute truth, the sketches and studies which accompany this limited review of his powers will afford some comprehension.

The bold and free outlines of the young woman seated on a camp-chair, with her back toward the spectator, is as good an example of the artist's supple manner of pen-manipulation as could be given. The close studies of draperies in his pencil memoranda, and the spirited action of the mediæval cavalry-man and his fiery mount, display the versatility of the true illustrator, and show what simplicity of style, coupled with soundness of drawing, will do for the depicter of the ordinary. Very much at ease is Mr. de Thulstrup in his pictured environments. Whether he be on the deck



"AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TYPE." BY T. DE THULSTRUP.

of a transatlantic steamer, in the brougham of a Moneybags, or before the belching cannons of fort or cruiser, the accessories of his illustrations are just what they are in reality, and not composed in the studio for the bare purposes of picturement. You entertain no doubt of his familiarity with the ever-varying backgrounds against which his figures are posed. You soon learn to trust him in the minor parts of a picture as you rely upon the veracity of the camera. But the difference between the realism of the camera and the realism of art is the difference between mechanism and thought—matter and

mind—and when individuality stamps fancy and originality upon the thought, comparison ceases absolutely.

The sphere of book and magazine illustration is one which yearly widens and gathers to itself complexity. There are few men engaged professionally in the art of illustration to-day who feel free to wander in every path which offers pictorial posies for the mere plucking. The art is divided into specialties; this man is at his best in character delineations, and that one has shown himself a master in portrayals of marine life and oceanic episode. Still another illustrator is noted for his skill in picturing the gay life of the metropolis, while the man in the studio next to him confines himself to suburban views and people, or perhaps portrays with exquisite delicacy the doings of an imaginative world and its fancied populace. None but the men of widest experience and broad-trusted to run the entire gamut of modern who are given this not only the men art, but are the ones easily ruined by conspot in the broad do-are wont to wander at of all they survey. In of versatilists Mr. de prominent and re-very few of his pro-are indeed more the high honors thrust

The habitation of genius is the America present moment—and never at a loss for congenial surround-of contemporaneity strong arm of art, and peculiar uses such pleasing phases of

as most wisely appeal to the numberless delvers in current illustrated journalism. He is still a young man, is Mr. de Thulstrup—young as artists go—with a mind constantly engaged in conjuring new ideas and planning new campaigns in the realm of art. Life has a favorable aspect to him now, for to succeed in one's calling and receive the substantial awards which ride with success is more to the aspiring workman than all other pleasures. Happy in his life as in his art—if it be permissible or even necessary to separate the two—Mr. de Thulstrup is most deserving of congratulation. Of his future career as either a monochromatic or multichromatic artist one may forecast many things agreeable. Certain it is that further enlarging his scope of subjects and attuning his art to the deeper and more resonant chords of human nature, he may be sure in the future of holding the affection of the people whose present regard for him is purely one of admiration.



Study for a painting by T. de Thulstrup.

"IN FEUDAL DAYS."

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Mr. de Thulstrup's of to-day—of the thus domiciled he is amusement amid his ings. From his castle he reaches out a selects for his own strong types and every-day existence